

REMARKS

Applicants claims 1-20 are patentable for the reasons set forth in the Remarks of the Reply filed August 9, 2005, which remarks are respectfully repeated by reference. Applicants respectfully request the examiner to consider such Remarks, without applicants having to repeat them verbatim here.

The dependent portions of new dependent claims 21-28 correspond to the dependent portions of original claims 6, 8, 10 and 12-16. These claims are patentable because they depend from and incorporate the subject matter of claim 17 which is patentable for the reasons set forth in the Remarks of August 9, 2005.

New independent claim 29 corresponds generally to original claim 7 rewritten in independent form. The dependent portions of new dependent claims 30-41 correspond to the dependent portions of original claims 2-6, 8, 10 and 12-16. These dependent claims are patentable because they depend from and incorporate the subject matter of new independent claim 29, if for no other reason.

New claim 29, corresponding generally to previous claim 7 rewritten in independent form, is patentable over Mintgen, as claim 7 was not rejected on the basis of Mintgen.

Claim 29 is patentable over EP '972 for the following reasons:

EP '972 discloses a compression spring with a controllable valve 11 for interconnecting the sectional casing chambers 4, 5, and an automatic overload valve 18. The automatic valve 18 comprises an annular sealing disk 21, which is axially movable and closes an automatic overflow connection 19. For closing the automatic overflow connection 19, the sealing disk 21 is pressed against the piston 10 by a spring element 20 which is disposed between the sealing disk 21 and a retaining ring 22. The retaining ring 22 is received in a coaxially designed groove. Thus, the valve element disclosed in EP '972 comprises at least three components, namely the annular sealing disk 21, the spring element 20 and the retaining ring 22.

In comparison with EP '972, the valve element 41a of the present invention is constructed in form of annular disk which is self pre-loaded, i.e. loaded by itself, and which is received with an inward peripheral area in a coaxial groove 45. Thus, the valve element 41a of the present invention simultaneously serves all the functions of the annular disk 21, spring element 20 and retaining ring 22 of EP '972. This results in a simpler and more cost-efficient

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construction of the automatic valve 41 compared with that of
EP '972.

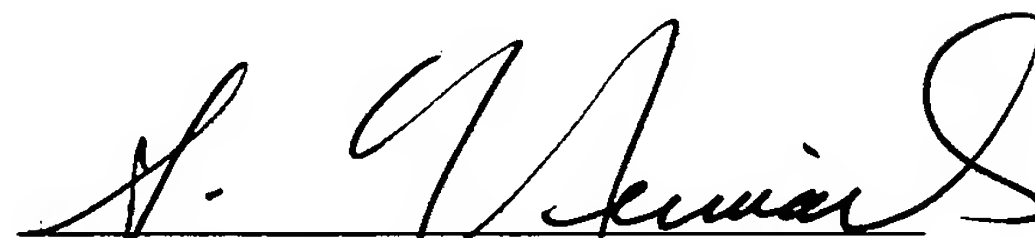
EP '972 does not contain any hint for a person
skilled in the art how to integrate the components of the
automatic valve as disclosed and claimed in the present
application in order to simplify the construction of the
automatic valve. Thus, claim 29 and the claims that depend
therefrom define novel and unobvious subject matter over EP
'972 and therefore should be allowed.

Applicants respectfully request favorable
consideration and formal allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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